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*HOLLOWNESS, NARROWNESS,
AND FEAR.*

1

Hollowness, Narrowness, and Fear:

WARNINGS FROM THE JEWISH CHURCH.

THREE LECTURES DELIVERED AT CUDDESDEN
THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE,

IN EMBER-WEEK, SEPT. 1869,

BY

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TO THE
PRINCIPAL, VICE-PRINCIPAL,
AND OTHER OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF
CUDDESDEN THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE,
THESE LECTURES
DELIVERED IN THEIR CHAPEL,
AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,
ARE RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
WITH THE AUTHOR'S CORDIAL THANKS FOR THE
KINDNESS AND CONSIDERATION WITH WHICH THEY
WERE RECEIVED.

LECTURE I.

Holiness.

ST. MATTHEW xxiii. 1—3.

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to His disciples, saying, The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."

IT is impossible to read the solemn warnings of this chapter conscientiously without a strong feeling of misgiving and fear. Picture to yourselves that Christ addressed its burning words of condemnation to the rightful representatives of that ancient Church which God had Himself established in the Jewish nation, for the purpose of receiving His oracles, and guarding His revelation, and passing on the torch of Divine truth from age to age. No claims could possibly be higher, no prestige could be greater, no authority could be more commanding, than that of the Scribes and Pharisees who really sat in Moses' seat, and whose precepts were to be observed even when their practice was emphatically condemned. Their spiritual downfall supplies the leading proof of a principle to which many of the darkest pages of history bear their witness; the certainty that God will Himself destroy the very sys-

tems which He has established, if ever a time arrives when their spirit has departed; and yet that those forms may retain their outward dignity and authority up to the moment of their fall. We cannot doubt that if the Jews had been faithful to their trust, they would have rejoiced to resign it to the Messiah when He came, and would have been honoured as the foremost members of the Church, for which their national history had been moulded to prepare the way. This is not only obvious in itself, but is acknowledged throughout the Apostolic history. "Unto you first" was the burthen of every early sermon which was preached to the Jews. "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles ^a." It was the purpose of God that Judaism should be transmuted into Christianity; but it was solely due to Jewish unbelief and sin that this transfer was accompanied by the ruin which crushed their Church and nation. This is the unfailing witness which all history confirms. God's work is always done, but unfaithful instruments are broken and discarded. The Spirit still lives on, and clothes itself with fresh organizations, when the systems which man's faithlessness had vitiated are shattered and destroyed. We are compelled to draw the same lesson from the disappearance of so many of those great Churches to which the light of the Gospel was originally trusted. The faith spreads and prospers;

^a Acts iii. 26; xiii. 46.

the gates of hell are ever baffled as of old. And yet ecclesiastical history supplies a close parallel to the secular history of decaying empires, as it unfolds the long pageant of departing Churches, each following after the other to the silence of decay and death.

In the eight woes which Christ pronounced against the leaders of the Jews, we may expect to find a revelation of the reasons which brought about the first and greatest of these downfalls; a disclosure of the sins which had eaten out the heart of a system outwardly so impressive and imposing, and had left it standing like a building long exposed to the encroachments of the waters, when the waves have at last sapped its foundations and made it ready for its fall. And these lessons must clearly have a direct and weighty significance for the members of any established system, however divine in its origin and venerable in its authority. No Church of these latter days can possess a loftier title, a more divine sanction, a more commanding history, than that which had distinguished the Church and nation of the Jews. No such system ever fell more completely. In the case of no such fall have we been favoured with an inspired commentary of equal value and authority with that in which Christ disclosed the reasons which had brought about the downfall of the Jews.

What, then, is the central error around which the woes which Christ pronounced upon the Scribes and Pharisees revolved; and what is the exact danger to which they were exposed in common with ourselves?

The sins with which they were charged were briefly these: that while the dispensation with which they were entrusted was divine and holy, they had both debased it as a theory and forsaken it in practice. They had debased it, by inventing rules which enabled them to escape great moral obligations under the pretext of obedience to religious forms. They had blunted the edge of truth and righteous dealing by resting the force of oaths on arbitrary definitions at the cost of plain straightforward meaning; they had enforced a strict discipline on their disciples, and had used a lax one for themselves; they cared more for the pomp of their rank than for the duties it involved; they concealed covetousness and injustice under the garb of devotion; they blinded themselves to the consciousness of their own sins by a show of zeal in seeking proselytes; they substituted petty observances for the great moral and religious claims of "judgment, mercy, and faith;" they veiled secret rottenness beneath a fair outside; they proved themselves to be heirs to the persecutors of the prophets, even by the temper in which they built their tombs; and while they thus fancied themselves better than their fathers, they were really filling up the measure of their fathers' sins. This is a fearful picture of the degradation of a religious system which was originally God's own gift to their nation,—which, as it left His holy hands, was "holy; and the commandment holy, and just, and good^b." The Scribes and Pharisees, I must repeat, were the sons of faithful

^b Rom. vii. 12.

Abraham according to the flesh ; they were the rightful representatives of an establishment which had been moulded in every detail by express instructions from above. Yet in their hands it had lost its heart and substance, and only subsisted on the ancient prestige of its outward form. Its professors had learnt to care more for a dying tradition than for a living spirit ; more for ritual observances than for a religious life. Is it possible for us to sum up all these detailed sins under some one principle of error, which shall bring home the lesson to ourselves ?

We may perhaps draw near towards finding such a principle by remembering that though “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance^c” on His part, they are undoubtedly conditional on the part of man. The Jews broke those conditions both negatively and positively : they both failed to do what God had enjoined, and they substituted practices which God had condemned. They rested on their privilege, but forgot its obligations. They acted as though they had acquired an indefeasible right to the blessings, which they really held only as God’s stewards in the universal interests of man. In a word, they had fallen into a state of *spiritual deadness* : and this is, I think, the one great sin against which the whole chapter would guard us, and the one great warning which it offers to ourselves. What do we mean by spiritual deadness, but the existence of a form from which the spirit has departed ; a form which re-

^c Rom. xi. 29.

tains its outward stateliness, and keeps up something of its pristine beauty, but which is really tottering to its downfall, because rotten at the core? You have heard of trees which have been so thoroughly hollowed out by insects, that nothing but the outer bark remains; the deceitful semblance of substantial strength, which a single blow will shatter into dust. Such is the condition of a Church from which the life has departed; such was the personal position of too many among the Jews; such is the sad unreality which we must above all things seek to shun and pray against for ourselves.

On the three evenings on which I am to have, if God will, the great privilege of addressing you, I propose to consider this fundamental sin of *spiritual deadness* in these three relations:—first, as it leads to personal hollowness of character; next, as it takes the form of spiritual pride, felt towards persons who seem to enjoy a lower range of outward privileges; thirdly, as it leads us to dread and resist new truths, or truths which we take to be new, simply because we have lost the living power of appreciating and assimilating every healthy birth of thought, or every fresh revelation of the light of God.

Though we began by looking at the case of falling Churches, we are justified in first confining ourselves to individual dangers; because a whole consists only of its several parts, and each person is a kind of microcosm, in whom the tendencies and perils of the whole body are displayed. And this is, of course, the proper

point to begin with; because each of us, in the first instance, has to deal mainly with his own difficulties; and the first contribution we can offer towards the common weal of any social system is to seek to be pure and healthy in ourselves. What, then, are the signs of that spiritual deadness, against which we ought to be severally upon our guard?

1. The first sign, perhaps, is a disposition to use words without meaning: and if we use many words, they are exceedingly likely to fall short of meaning. You will recollect the warning of a great writer, once our own:—

“Prune thou thy *words*; the thoughts control
That o'er thee swell and throng:
They will condense within thy *soul*,
And change to purpose strong⁴. ”

The first mark of evil mentioned in this chapter is, that they “say, and do not;” another is, that they prescribe burthens which they will not bear; another, that they love the mere outward respect of “greetings in the markets;” another, that “for a pretence” they “make long prayer.” And thus we know that the Jews talked much and boastfully of Abraham their father; to which Christ replied, “If ye were Abraham's children, ye would *do the works* of Abraham.” At another time, Christ emphatically condemned the disciples who called Him Lord, Lord, and yet did not the things that He told them⁵. Some of these marks

⁴ *Lyra Apostolica*, No. lxxviii.

⁵ St. John viii. 39.

• St. Matt. xxiii. 8, 4, 7, 14.

• St. Luke vi. 46.

are the signs of hardened and advanced hypocrisy; but for our own guidance, let us look at the error in a more elementary form. It is a great temptation, then, for a young clergyman to talk much of his plans, to be copious on his hopes, to dwell largely on the difficulties he expects to encounter, and to rest, with a tinge of self-satisfaction, on the confidence with which he proposes to confront those difficulties. Now this is not necessarily wrong in itself, but it is clearly in the *direction* of what is wrong and unreal, just as the sap of the tree is evidently wasting itself if it runs too much to leaves. If the strength tends to desert the centre, the first step is taken towards that spiritual desolation which Christ describes under the image of the "empty, swept, and garnished" heart^b. The first advance is made towards the substitution of the praise of men for the proper motive of the praise of God. And this fault may easily lead on to a great sin like that of Balaam, who concealed from himself the deadly growth of avarice within his heart, because he could state great truths in the loftiest language, and make a boast of his steadfast purity in sounding professions, while his very soul was shrivelled up, and the life of the spirit was dead within him. A ready flow of language is too likely to foster a sense of self-complacency, which tempts the enemy to seek an entrance into the ill-guarded heart. It is pleasant to see a young man fresh and hopeful: it seems hard and unkind to check the tide of enthusiasm, which makes little of difficulties, and is not damped by self-

^b St. Matt. xii. 44.

distrust, and only longs for worlds to conquer. Yet the experienced guide is always anxious to see the glowing sentence matched with the firm and self-denying deed; and he cannot fail sometimes to recognise the most hopeful and promising servant of his Master, where the temper is less sanguine, and where words are few.

2. If we pass from the outward to the inward, we may perhaps find a second sign of spiritual deadness in the extent to which the Jews had lost hold of the great external truths of theology, as was shewn by their obstinate blindness to the Divinity of the Messiah, and their complete misconception of His character and work. Thus Christ told them at another time: "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me¹." It was the very key to their unbelief that they had lost that spiritual insight which would have beheld the Divine image of Christ appearing at every stage and crisis of their history; foretold by prophets, foreshadowed by types, prefigured and anticipated in all the great judges, rulers, and teachers of Israel. It was the very point at issue throughout Christ's trial. They might have acquitted Him if He would have been satisfied with the merely human position of a prophet or a teacher, but they thought it blasphemy if He made Himself equal with the Father, or in any way assumed the character of the Son of God, who was most strictly David's Lord. Now this same temper has been widely fostered among ourselves, by

¹ St. John v. 46.

the prevalence of what we may call an unduly *subjective* theology. No theology can possibly be sound and fruitful which does not rest the faith of man on the external revelation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;—the Father who is of none; the Son who is eternally begotten of the Father; the Spirit who proceeds from both the Father and the Son: the Father of an infinite Majesty, His honourable, true, and only Son, also the Holy Ghost the Comforter. I am not sure that we are always influenced by a sufficiently deep conviction that all true religion must in this way be rested on theology; and that if we lose our anchorage on the firm rock of a sound theology, we shall drift away into spiritual desolation, under the uncertain guidance of the fancies and speculations of man. Yet a moment's reflection will shew the reason. If man originally fell by self-assertion,—by seeking to be a law unto himself instead of walking by God's law; if he was stripped as well as wounded, when he lapsed into the sad condition of guilt before God; if he was deprived of that robe of original righteousness, which consisted in likeness to the Son and Communion with the Spirit; it follows that his recovery must rest on the restoration of those broken ties, and on the re-opening of a living connection between his spirit and the Spirit of the Lord.

Clearly, then, it is far *less* important, though, in its place, not *unimportant*, to analyze the processes of our own mental action, and to master the human side of man's religious life, than to strengthen our grasp on *those external* and eternal verities, which shew us how

we may resume our vital communion with the sole source of life, the Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity. To revert to Christ's own image. The heart of man is then only empty, in the sense of exposure to spiritual danger, when he has grieved or quenched the Holy Spirit; and how can he grieve or quench It more effectually than by living in complete unconsciousness of Its presence, and dwelling solely on the possibilities and capacities of man? We are likened in Scripture to members and to branches; and we all know how soon the life departs from branch or member when either has lost the circulation which connects it with the central life, issuing from the root of the tree or from the heart of the man. The downward course is fearful and certain: first the separation, then the withering, then the burning. Therefore it is one of the foremost duties of a young clergyman to feed and sustain his spiritual life by continuous study in works of pure theology; in deep expositions of the Articles of the Creed; in devotional meditations on the revelations of the Godhead. You may and you must study human nature, in yourselves, in your parishioners, in history, in biography, in the shifting movements of the world around. You will never touch the hearts of men if you have not been sympathising observers of their motives, and learnt to enter into their sorrows and affections; but the greatness, the power, the elevation of true Christian teaching, arises from the fact that we can group all knowledge of this kind around the keen and piercing light of revelation; we see fresh brightness and beauty in the poor

virtues of man, when we regard them as mere scattered rays or features of the broken image of the Lord ; we learn to comprehend both his faults and their remedy, when we recognise them as inroads which sin has made upon that image, and when we have mastered the gracious method by which the likeness is restored.

3. Thirdly, we are exposed to great and inevitable hindrances in our spiritual life if we mistake the proper character, and so fail to make the right use, of that great sacramental system which runs throughout, and even beyond, the means of grace. If science has done much to disclose the perfectness of the arrangements by which God works through the complicated media of nature, so religion, in like manner, but in a far nobler degree, teaches us to adore the wonderful wisdom which adjusts the various forms of nature and of matter, to be the channels through which spiritual grace may pass into our souls. There was clearly no point on which the Jews had failed more conspicuously than in the way in which they had emptied all their religious ordinances of what we may call their sacramental value, by losing all living consciousness of their spiritual meaning. To the eye of the Christian, even nature herself is, in a lower sense, not merely a parable, but a kind of sacrament, the outward forms of which are filled by God's loving bounty with spiritual significance. If this truth reaches its height in those solemn mysteries on which Christ has set the seal of His special ordinance, yet none the less surely does it *spread out widely*, though more faintly,—first through

all other channels of devotion, and next through all material agencies through which the lessons of religion are conveyed, as Christ conveyed them through parables for the instruction of the Jews. It is our foremost duty, brethren, to seek that *sensitiveness* of religious apprehension which can feel the touch of God in all things; which knows His presence under every veil; which is convinced that no truths of the material universe can vie in certainty or in importance with the spiritual relations existing between man's soul and God. In days when there is much impatience of sacramental teaching, it is well to remember that the doctrines which are specially described by those expressions represent only the crown and summit of a wide range of principles, which recognise new life and meaning beneath the garment of this outward world. And by a necessary consequence, a deadness to the highest of these truths will blind men to the very existence of the lower truths; and the world loses all that supernatural glory of which faith is so keenly conscious, regarding it as the mere framework, through which we may feel as it were the *pulsations* of the manifold agencies of God's Spirit. It is probable that a forgetfulness of this truth has, had no small influence in fostering those Pantheistic tendencies by which we are told that some foreign Churches are so deeply tainted. If men wish to see God *in* all things, and yet have lost the true doctrine which enables them to do so, they fall naturally into the error of confounding God *with* all things; of losing all belief in the Personality of God; and of refusing to

distinguish between the Creator and His work. How can we cure this but by keeping up a keen belief, fostered by a constant communion of devotion, in the Personal Lord and God, who is ever about our path, about our bed, by all our ways ; who makes Himself known, through all His ordinances, not as a mechanical law, but as a loving Friend ; whose nearness we ought to recognise, if it were only by the kindling of the heart within us, when He fulfils His promise by His constant or His special presence, and when He feeds our souls through His avenues of Grace ?

Perhaps thus much may suffice at present on these three dangers of the spiritual life ; that of substituting words for deeds, that of losing our hold on external revelation, and that of forgetting the sacramental character which secures God's presence in the means of grace. The first of these leads to simple hollowness, or shallowness ; the second cuts us off from the great source of spiritual strength, by isolating our souls from the only fountain of life and light ; the third chokes up the chief avenues of communication, through which the grace of God may flow into our spirits. No wonder the spirit becomes dead within us, if we first fail to act out our professions ; if we next omit to recognise the Divine source of our recovery ; and if we go on to make mere forms of holy ordinances, and lose all consciousness of God's spiritual presence, acting everywhere throughout the world. One word more will be sufficient to remind you of a fearful peril *we should none of us forget* ; that there is a still more

direct road to spiritual deadness, if we fall into the temptations of personal sin. Spiritual deficiencies indeed will often lead to carnal indulgences, as the Jews proved when they made themselves “like unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones and of all uncleanness;” but it is sadly too possible for the current to set in the opposite direction, and for spiritual deadness to be the mournful issue of a sensual fall. We cannot too often remind ourselves of this,—especially we who are called to minister in holy things,—when we recollect that experience combines with Scripture to shew us how hard it is to climb beyond the reach of temptation. But one thing must at all events be scarcely necessary; namely, to point out that our great protection against this and all kindred dangers must be sought for in the fulness and reality of our spiritual life; in a practical earnestness which weighs every word, and will use no word that goes beyond our meaning; in a devout faith, that loves to linger on every detail of revealed truth, and to realize the personal attributes and perfections of God; and finally, in a keen and living sense that God draws near to us through prayer, through Scripture, and through Sacraments, till our eyes are opened and we know Him in the breaking of bread, and our hearts burn within us while He talks with us by the way, and while He opens to us the Scriptures.

LECTURE II.

Narrowness.

ST. MATTHEW xxiii. 12.

"And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased : and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

WE were engaged last night in considering that first form of spiritual deadness which consists in hollowness of character. We are now to examine that more positive form of the evil, which arises when the heart vacated by a nobler principle becomes the abode of a narrow spiritual pride. As in the former case, so in this, we can draw full illustrations of this danger and its causes from the history of the downfall of the Jews. "We be Abraham's seed," they said ; how can *we* be confounded with the sons of the stranger ? we "were never in bondage to any man" : how can *we* need the message which summons us to arise and be free ? Thus their presumptuous sins had reached their greatest height, at the very moment when the system which they had debased and perverted was on the verge of its fall. Their pride in their own spiritual ancestry, and their scorn for all who were less highly favoured, completely blinded them to the reality of the

* St. John viii. 33.

sad revolution, through which they had crossed over from the parentage of Abraham to the parentage of Satan ; from the line of Sarah to the line of Hagar ; from the spiritual freedom of Isaac to the spiritual bondage of Ishmael^b. It was both a sign and a further cause of this degradation that they had learnt to look with false pride on those who were less blessed with outward privilege,—on the Gentile and Samaritan, as well as on the publican and sinner among themselves ; and to regard it as the worst of blasphemies to disunite the claim to God's exclusive favour from the possessors of the Holy Land, the Temple, and the Law. It is clearly possible for ourselves to fall into the same state of spiritual blindness, if we learn to pride ourselves on the supposed tradition of Apostolic doctrine, without keeping up a living sense of Apostolic faith ; to rely on the outward succession of Apostolic mission, without possessing the inward inheritance of the Apostolic spirit.

But this question could be stated in a form that might seem to involve some difficulty. For if a want of humility is so great a sin in God's sight, how are we to combine a firm belief in our own principles with a deep conviction of our liability to error ? How are we to cherish a certainty that our religious system is higher and nobler than that of others, without exalting ourselves above them, and looking down on their deficiencies in a Pharisaic temper of spiritual pride ? How are we to maintain a sense of superiority, with-

^b St. John viii. 44; Gal. iv. 22—31.

out trenching on the indispensable graces of charity, humility, and self-renunciation? This is a very important question for the Clergy, who believe themselves to be entrusted with a venerable deposit of Apostolic antiquity, both as regards the institutions which they administer, and the interpretations of Scripture which they are pledged to maintain. It is not enough to say merely that on both sides we must distinguish between the individual and the system; upholding truth without a sense of personal pride, and condemning error without any breach of charity towards its supporters. This distinction is correct and important; but the subject requires a much deeper and more discriminating treatment. It is essential that we should have a clear and exact conception of the relation between the Church and all less perfect systems; and in learning to guard against erroneous modes of dealing with this subject, we shall again derive great benefit from studying the nature of that narrow pride which Christ condemned in Scribe and Pharisee.

We may commence, I think, with the same distinction which we drew before, between God's gifts, which are without repentance, and the conditions and limitations under which they may be forfeited by man. The apostolic teaching marks out with extreme clearness the exact relation between privileges and blessings; the order in which they are generally instituted, as distinct from the order in which they are commonly perpetuated; the danger lest the spirit should desert the form; and the certainty that the form may linger

on, in apparently outward perfection, even after the spirit has inwardly died out and departed. It is the ordinary rule of Providence to convey grace *through* ordinances; but we are not to infer that the ordinance was in every instance created and administered before the original grace was bestowed. Just as the creation of a species must have differed from its perpetuation by ordinary birth, so the outset of a system must have often differed from the mode in which it is continued and preserved. The gifts of the Spirit, for instance, had descended on the household of Cornelius before the forms with which they were connected had as yet been complied with; as we learn from St. Peter's question, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which *have* received the Holy Ghost as well as we^c?" In the same way St. Paul points out that the justification of Abraham preceded his circumcision; his faith was "*reckoned*," "*not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision*"^d. And this principle is carried out more elaborately through the speech of St. Stephen, which is one long argument to shew that the gifts of the Spirit may be imparted before the institution of the form, and that the form may exist after it has lost the spirit; whence we are compelled to draw the inference that the absence of the form is no proof of rejection, and that its continuance is no test of continued acceptance. Abraham received God's call before his circumcision, while still a dweller in a heathen land; he was summoned to the Holy Land before he

^c Acts x. 47.

^d Rom. iv. 10, &c.

possessed one foot's breadth of its surface; he received the promise of a blessed posterity "when as yet he had no child;" his seed was to sojourn amidst sufferings in a strange land for centuries; Joseph was sold into Midian and Egypt; it was amongst those aliens that he experienced many blessings from the Lord. It was in Egypt that the patriarchs found relief from famine; it was in Samaria, not in Judah, that the twelve were buried; it was in Egypt that Moses learned wisdom; it was in Midian that he became a father; it was in the desert that he enjoyed Divine communion, and received the dispensation of the Law. At every step it is carefully noted that the blessing was bestowed, whenever God so willed it, before, and independently of, the gift of privilege; that in fact the privilege often served only to crown and confirm a blessing which had been previously granted. And St. Stephen proceeds afterwards to establish the corresponding truth, that the possession of the privilege—the tenure of the Holy Land, and Law, and Temple—did not protect the Israelites against spiritual deadness, and against their consequent exposure to the anger of God. Nothing can be clearer than this reasoning, which is again enforced and illustrated by one who had first heard it from the lips of St. Stephen, the Apostle of the Gentiles. Nothing can be plainer than the lesson for ourselves. It is at our own spiritual risk that we deny the possibility that goodness may germinate beyond the hallowed borders; it is at our own spiritual risk that we place a higher value on external forms than on the gifts

which they are ordinarily commissioned to convey. On the other hand, it would be very shallow and thoughtless to undervalue forms; and it is presumption *for us* to expect that blessings can be claimed, even if they are granted to others, through other ways than God's appointed channels.

There is no doubt that the highest and most perfect system is found where form and spirit go together; where the entire organization works in harmony, in exact conformity to the declared will of God. This is a position against which one does not see that there can be any possible appeal. But neither the Jewish nor the Christian Church continued to fulfil that Divine conception, which has been perpetually interfered with by the shortcomings of man. We are compelled to confess that schism and disunion have combined with want of faith and love to introduce a breach between the spirit and the form: we are forced to acknowledge that goodness and the Divine system are not necessarily and indissolubly joined together; but that, as there may be sin and faithlessness within the precincts of the Church itself, so there may be sparks of true light and grace beyond the fold. Granting then the fact of this dislocation, we have to ask what is the position of those who, like ourselves, are clear that they have the great advantage and blessing of being enclosed within God's Church, as bearing at once on the shortcomings of Churchmen, and on the claims of those who lie beyond our borders.

The position, then, which I think we may maintain

is this: that our organization and doctrine are alike uniform, authorized, and complete; possessing, in the literal sense, the mark of apostolicity, even if the less governed movements of the human will have imposed on us, as well as on all Churches everywhere, a less literal realization of the other great marks of Catholicity and unity. The bodies around us which are less completely organized hold truth in detached fragments, or masses, as we might call them: one such body has its discipline; another alleges that it offers a more thoroughly developed fraternity; another, perhaps, does more to kindle emotion; another uses a sterner logic; another claims to have a warmer faith in the unseen world, and a keener sense of Christ's approaching coming. And each of these, while boasting of its own peculiar jewel, declares it to be brighter than the corresponding jewel in the Church's crown. But if this boast sometimes may seem for a moment to be justified, it is only because each appears the brighter for its very isolation; it owes its prominence to that very imperfection, which is really a sign of error. Each truth in the full Creed, each rule or ordinance in the complete organization, is tempered and adjusted by the whole system with which it is combined and of which it forms part; and it is no more possible to develope one such particular without disturbance of the proportion of faith, than to strengthen one limb or function only without disturbing the proper health of the body. Clearly, however, the very first duty which we have to discharge in relation to any such imperfect

system is to acknowledge cordially and frankly whatever it possesses that is good and true. St. Paul followed this method even with the heathen, basing his preaching first on the truths of natural religion, which would be recognised alike in Lycaonia, at Athens, or at Rome. It is the best course in every controversy to begin with points of agreement: it only provokes needless animosity to set out by irritating points of difference. And in making this beginning it is well to be as conciliatory and generous as we can: taking the claims of others, so far as they are admissible at all, at their own value rather than at ours—knowing that whatever is really true and good is certainly God's gift, and must therefore be accepted thankfully and cheerfully, and conveys no merit or praise to man. And thus far, perhaps, we should be all agreed. The difficulty becomes greater when we have to deal with their *imperfections*: if ever we find ourselves unable to decline the controversy on points where we are bound, as Churchmen, to uphold a strong and opposite opinion. And here it will make a great difference in our position whether the good element which we have admitted in our opponent is diminishing or growing; that is to say, whether it is the remains of a decaying system, or the germination of a new and nobler life. Persons occupy a very different attitude when they are consciously depriving themselves of forms and privileges which they once enjoyed, and when they are struggling back from the disparagement of an imperfect state, to which they have been reduced by the errors of their fathers. It is

true that a large part of the Dissenters cannot easily be ranked in either of these classes, because they are rather stationary, than either falling or rising; they accept and are contented with their position, and are prepared to defend it as it stands. And obviously such persons are very difficult to deal with; but our difficulties will certainly be lessened, if we can detach from the central mass at least one of the other classes which I mentioned; namely, those who are seeking restoration to a higher organization and a more complete and varied life. Persons of this character demand and should receive, on every ground, our cordial sympathy. We should spare no trouble to remove their difficulties; we should grudge no explanation which may be needed to clear up their misapprehensions. We should treat them as those who have already received God's special invitation, and are not far from the kingdom of Grace. The earthly Court of Christ in His humility was crowded by aliens and strangers, who formed a scandal to the haughty Jew. Think of the many faithful Romans, of the woman who was a Canaanite, of the Samaritans who believed on far less evidence than the Jews possessed and yet rejected, of the Samaritan leper who returned to give God glory, of the Good Samaritan in whose acts and words the Church has always loved to read a figure of her Lord. Persons of this class often supply the most cheering features in a pastor's labours; and great would be our sin if any harshness or impatience on our side ever broke the *bruised reed* or quenched the smoking flax; if ever we

neglected such opportunities for the greatest usefulness, for which we shall have to give an account to our Judge.

But what are we to do when we are confronted with steady resistance or angry defiance? First, we must clearly arm ourselves with patience; but besides this we must recollect that there can scarcely ever have been a quarrel where the faults were all on one side. Persons who have left the Church must have done so under the pressure of what they thought a grievance. In some cases the Church has herself rejected them and forced them into schism by refusing them some privilege which they regarded as a portion of their Christian liberty. It cannot be wrong in all these instances to reconsider our position; rather it is a clear duty to find out what human fault has been mixed up with the Church's policy, and to remove it, so far as the power of doing so may fall within our individual spheres. The claim for greater liberty, for example, has often been the secret stirring of a genuine life. The dislike to a hierarchy has often been embittered by tyrannical and worldly conduct. A Church rule has been rejected with a more fierce determination because of the undeniable existence of personal sins among its rulers. A sacramental system has been discredited, because it has been mixed up with confessed superstitions. But perhaps no single cause has been responsible for a greater share in the mischief, than the relapse of Churchmen into the old Jewish error, of regarding their privileges as a property and not a trust.

It is certain that we possess nothing which we did not first receive ; and it is equally certain that we received nothing for our own sole use, our own profit, our own glorification, but everything only as the stewards of God, acting for the common benefit of man. We shall always hold a better position towards those who are without, in proportion as they feel that our urgency is entirely free from selfish motives, and as they see that we are not influenced either by the temper of Erastianism or by spiritual pride ; i.e., in proportion as we can convince them that we simply wish them to share in our advantages, and that we offer those advantages for their benefit alone, and neither to exalt a State system, nor to aggrandise ourselves.

It is impossible for such controversies to be conducted without a good deal of argument ; but much experience and observation have taught me, that the argumentative element is really far less important than the moral and the spiritual. You may rely on it that a sober self-denying life is far more influential than a thousand arguments ; and personal character will conquer more than doctrine. It is indispensable that a young clergyman should be sufficiently acquainted with the grounds of difference, and the historical and Scriptural proof of the truth, to answer any fair questions, and to give a reason for the principles which he maintains. All that I would urge is, that we should reserve this knowledge for defence, rather than press it forward as assailants ; that we should pray for grace *to promote our cause by self-sacrificing lives, as well*

as by a guarded and well-reasoned faith; and that we should never forget that holiness and charity are inconceivably more persuasive than the sharp answers of the most fluent tongue. It is right that we should earnestly seek for greater unity among all the professing followers of a common Lord. It is possible for us to let our thoughts dwell on the evils of our present disunion, till they seem to burn into the spirit, and almost reduce us to despair. But be sure that the foremost agency in restoring Apostolic unity is to couple pure and primitive faith with the moving influence of an Apostolic life. First of all, men should see that we seek after *holiness*. They are not likely to care for the claims of a clergy which shews itself deficient in temperance and self-control, or contents itself with a low moral standard. And next, they should see that our characters are marked by *depth and earnestness*. Few things are found more irritating than the combination of high claims with a frivolous and shallow temper; and few contrasts are more painful to a Churchman than that which might be sometimes drawn, between persons who have reached a venerable age under imperfect systems, and the assumed superiority of young men whose personal claims are slight and trivial, and who fail to match their clerical title with a really reverend life. And again it is essential that our devotion should be *fearless and unselfish*. Vast influence has been often gained by the clergy in any time of pestilence and danger, if they have been found staunch to their duties and utterly

regardless of all personal considerations, so long as they could preach Christ's message by the sick bed, or relieve the dying by administering the last consolations of religion. It is most important, too, that we should pray for grace to maintain a temper of real and unfeigned *humility*; the spirit of the true old parish priest of England; the spirit of Richard Hooker or George Herbert; men who would stand humbly, as individuals, before the very meanest members of their flock, who were simply attracted, not repelled, by the great gifts which their pastors veiled beneath that humility,—the piercing wit and large intelligence of the one, the rank and cultivation and courtly training of the other.

The subject I have dealt with, I fear very imperfectly, is connected with political questions of the very greatest difficulty, but these I have wished altogether to avoid. It has seemed to me more appropriate and useful to look at the matter as it will come before a parish priest in his ordinary ministrations; and the advice I have wished to tender may be summed up in this, that we must confront separation and disunion by shewing a noble example of *unity*; I mean unity of personal character, as well as unity of faith and system,—that unity which is the witness of a true and all-pervading spiritual *life*. Let our people only feel that, whatever we are, our characters at all events are *one and uniform*; that we practise what we preach; that we act out what we believe; that our system again is *complete and homogeneous*, as distinct from the sec-

tional narrowness of less perfectly organized bodies, who are always found to prefer one book of Scripture to another, who have their favourite doctrines, their select texts, their chosen characters and models in history ; and who are impatient of all teaching and all example which does not come within their peculiar sphere. We must strive to let them see and feel that the Church, in its spiritual life, possesses all the good things which they severally boast of, and unites them in a system which completes their imperfections. But above all things let them never feel that we are mere theorists, who are careless about carrying out our principles ; that we shun the burthens which we teach that others ought to bear ; or that we are influenced by the vainglorious temper of the Pharisees, who boasted that they drew the nearest to God's altar, and despised those who stood really nearer to that altar's God.

LECTURE III.

Fear.

ST. MATTHEW xxiii. 29—31.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets."

FEW persons can have read these verses intelligently without being conscious of some apparent difficulty in the argument, which it needs a little patient reflection to remove. The reason assigned does not seem to prove the accusation; indeed, it might be thought to point rather in the contrary direction. Words of regret and acts of reparation are certainly not the natural proofs which we use to convict men of partaking in a crime. There must be some deeper spiritual fault which thus connected the Scribes and Pharisees with those sins of their fathers which they verbally condemned. For let us put the question as it might strike us on the first opening of the passage. How could they make themselves sharers in hereditary guilt by

the very fact that they professed to reject it? How could they prove themselves to be the children of those who killed the prophets by repudiating their conduct, and adorning the tombs of their victims? What could be the common spiritual bond that united together those distant generations, which treated the same righteous persons, in presence or in memory, with cruel persecutions in the one case and with honour in the other? Is it not strange to allege that they established their descent from a race of murderers, by the very acts and words which they used, for the declared purpose of proclaiming their abhorrence of the crime? The answer to this question will lead us to the deepest principles of our Lord's teaching, when He is warning us against the spiritual deadness of the Jews.

The same temper, then, which leads men to resent and reject the keen admonitions of the living, often hides itself under an exaggeration of the merits of the dead. The departed have become comparatively powerless; they can no longer assail us with cutting rebuke, with searching remonstrance, with unanswerable condemnation. It is easy enough to idolize their memories, now that their living voices can disturb us no more. The Jews in the wilderness could exclaim against Moses when he tore them away from the soft indulgences of Egypt; yet they gloried in their descent from Abraham and the fathers, and doubtless dwelt often on the good old days of Jacob and of Joseph. And so the current ran on through the ages of the prophets, each generation detesting the guides of the

present, while they looked back with regretful longing to the leaders of the past. And so it was now, most conspicuously of all, when they were ready to crucify Christ, while they prided themselves in Moses and the prophets; nay, even in those very prophets whose teaching had most clearly foreshadowed that of Christ, and who had been martyred by their forefathers in a temper that anticipated their own. The fathers had persecuted the prophets when their doctrines sounded urgent, new, and strange. The sons had now learnt to accept as a matter of course that teaching by which their fathers had been irritated, but which had become comparatively commonplace and familiar to themselves. They were ready, in their turn, to divert the whole force of the persecuting temper which they had inherited, against the living teachers of another doctrine, which yet in truth was not another, but which to their faithless ears seemed unauthorized and strange; and it was the same disposition which led them to extol the memories of the ancient teachers, whose tongues could no more rouse, whose rebukes and warnings lay comparatively lifeless on the page; to build their tombs and garnish their sepulchres; “and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.”

We have here reached a third and most instructive warning against spiritual deadness, as it assumes the form of incapacity to recognise a new truth when we *meet with it*, especially when urged by living voices,

which we are prone to receive with dislike and jealousy; the tendency to condemn any apparently strange truth without a moment's hesitation, as vitiated at the outset by the mere fact of its novelty, or of that which we may *think* its novelty, because our blind attachment to our existing phrases has made us incapable of recognising even the oldest of truths, if they are presented in an altered form.

Those principles which the Jews detested as novel and objectionable were, in reality, the very oldest truths of all. The Divinity of Christ, which they found so great a stumbling-block, was really, as I remarked before, the basis and foundation of the whole series of prophecies, the only key which could unlock the great problems of their history, the only possible source for the blessings which were to be diffused to all men, through the election and preservation of their favoured line. It is very instructive to mark the pertinacity with which they clung to the wrong issue, through all the details of their enquiry into the alleged guilt of Christ. They refused to go beyond the warning of Moses, who had told them that false prophets and dreamers might arise, and give signs and wonders, and make those signs and wonders come to pass^a. In this way they contrived to destroy the significance of the miracles of Christ; and they thought His claims of Divinity the sure proofs of a delusion,—a demand that they should follow Him to serve a new and unknown God. It is difficult to imagine a stronger instance, where the

^a Deut. xiii. 1, 2.

blinding effects of a narrow prejudice have closed men's eyes against the broad truths of a lofty revelation ; where a perverted interpretation has served to empty a whole system of its truth and power ; so that the words of Moses and the prophets, which they professed to reverence, had at last failed altogether to convey the impression which the Holy Spirit had designed, and they slew their Redeemer because they judged Him as a man, and had not faith to apprehend the overwhelming proofs which stamped Him as the Incarnate Son of God.

It is impossible for us, brethren, to repeat this error on anything like the same scale as the Jews, because there can never again be any further revelation, which is of equal dignity and importance with that which they rejected in their blindness. And yet it is quite possible for spiritual deadness to assume the same character of fear, if we grow so case-hardened in favourite formulas, and so inveterate in prejudice, that we repudiate any professed new light without examination ; if we content ourselves with praising famous men and our fathers that begat us, while we set ourselves blindly against any new disclosures of truth, which God may have been pleased to send us through their sons. In one respect this subject was anticipated last evening, so far as we described the difficulty of recognising the real spiritual truth which may lie hidden under imperfect systems. But I propose now to take up the subject in its relation, not to professing Christians who lie *beyond the pale* of the Church, but to teachers of a dif-

ferent kind of truth, who too often separate themselves altogether from the Christian name, and whose message is at all events quite distinct from the Christian revelation : that is to say, I propose to consider very briefly our duties towards those alleged scientific discoveries, which many think the boast, and some are more disposed to dread as the danger of our age. My aim will be to point out that an earnest spiritual life, and a keen spiritual instinct, will predispose us to believe that God may have really had the gracious intention of enriching the families of men with new blessings, through His outpouring of fresh and startling scientific light.

One principle should be clearly understood at the outset, and it is not the less necessary because it looks like a truism, viz., that no advantage can be gained on either side by mere misrepresentation of the position of an opponent ; and that neither side has any right to convert its search for truth into an instrument of hostility against some belief which it dislikes. It has been a great mistake on the part of some scientific enquirers, to catch, as if with pleasure, at any discovery that seemed to contradict the current interpretations of Scripture. It has been an equal mistake on the part of the clergy, to insist on regarding such enquirers as the real representatives of science, and to appeal to their animosity as a reason for regarding all scientific advances with suspicion. No good is ever done by any search for truth that is not absolutely single-minded : and as little good is done by any defence of truth that is not candid, generous, and considerate. It is much

to be feared that, on both these points, many faults have been committed on both sides. And yet it is clear that no suspicion can properly attach to a subject through the accidental faults and imperfections of its promoters and supporters: and it is equally unjust for the clergy to look with dislike on the advances of science, because some scientific men are captious and hostile, and for men of science to regard every clergyman as an enemy, because some of our brethren have misunderstood the question, and others have been vexed and irritated by what they thought hasty and injurious treatment. It is no doubt most distressing to a Christian to hear the shout of victory raised over a discovery, on the very ground that it seems destructive to some ancient article of the faith. But let us not forget that it may be equally grievous to religious men of science, not only to overhear such mistakes on the part of their colleagues, but to be mixed up in the condemnation passed on a misuse of scientific progress, which they would themselves be the first to disown.

It is not necessary to go over the commonplaces of the subject by returning to the history of those old persecutions of which we are all now ashamed; and which we regard as having been both mistakes and sins. And yet there is one aspect in which they ought never to be forgotten. We must use them as warnings, to guard us against the temptation to repeat the error. We now repudiate them with a sense of shame, because we see that they were both needless and unjust. They were needless, because the injury to the

faith, which men apprehended, was never really inflicted. I believe we should be justified in declaring that there is not a single scientific truth of older date, however much it was dreaded on its promulgation, which has not done more to confirm than to weaken the faith of the Church. And they were unjust, so far as the promoters of those new doctrines were really single-minded, and were thinking simply of the cause of truth, and were free from any set purpose to interfere with men's religious faith. It inspires fresh hope for the future to remember the great lesson of the past,—that the discoveries which were at first received with suspicion are now universally accepted, and yet the faith of revelation shines only brighter than before. Let us be careful, then, not to pride ourselves on our candour in acknowledging the old mistake, while we are still unconsciously under the influence of the old persecuting spirit. No course could more exactly repeat the Jewish sin which Christ condemned ; the combination of a readiness to build tombs and garnish sepulchres in honour of great names of old, and an eagerness to repudiate the mistakes of our fathers, with a spirit which all the while bears witness to our descent from the persecutors, by our willingness to repeat their sin.

But here it might be urged in answer, that spiritual deadness can only mean insensibility to those truths which we especially describe as spiritual, to which head the discoveries of science do not seem to belong : and in like manner that the life of the spirit relates

solely to that Divine communion which connects man's spirit with the Spirit of the Lord. Now such a reply would overlook the great principle, that all truth whatever is the property and gift of God; and that scientific disclosures are only one form of His revelation, though He is pleased to make them the reward of the researches of man. The disposition, therefore, to suspect a constant hostility between science and religion is a part of the same Manichæan tendency, which leads men to divide the world between two opposite principles, as though we owed one great class of knowledge to God, and another class to the adversary of God. Against all such dispositions we are bound to urge, that all light of every kind belongs alone to God, and streams forth from Him originally, whatever may be the channel through which it is conveyed. And if science has enabled us to form enlarged conceptions of the vastness of creation, and has elevated our ideas of the boundless resources of creative wisdom, we are bound for that reason, as well as for others, to recognise science as a minister of God, and to thank God for those illuminations which have changed the night of nature into an ever-broadening day.

But again an answer meets us: what are we to say if the conclusions of science seem at variance with the text of Scripture? There is no doubt that this is really the position which has always excited the alarm of the clergy, though the history of interpretation shews us most clearly how the difficulty can be met. Whenever science has assumed a new attitude, and its discoveries

have broken up the icebound surface of old opinions, the new doctrines have been thought to come into collision with received interpretations of Scripture, and have been therefore regarded as fraught with danger to the faith. Startled by the sudden shock, the clergy have often proved unable, for the moment, to distinguish between the matter and the form of revelation ; and they have dreaded lest any correction of the outward form should shake the fabric, of which it is really an unimportant outwork. The answer has, however, been always ready on the part of the wisest of the Church's teachers, who have pointed out that what is really contradicted in such cases is not God's revelation, but only the human language in which it has made itself intelligible to its original recipients ; or even the human interpretation which has been put upon that language, and which we are bound to alter when a profounder theory of scientific truth is taught^b.

But yet further it may be alleged that we are now exposed to a still deeper danger, which no superficial corrections of interpretations will remove. Even if the clergy, it is said, have now become more willing to re-

^b One quotation must suffice, where a long catena could be given : " Dicendum quod, sicut Augustinus docet,—in hujusmodi quæstionibus duo sunt observanda. Primo quidem, ut veritas Scripturæ inconcusse teneatur. Secundo, cum Scriptura divina multipliciter exponi possit, quod nulli expositioni aliquis ita præcise inhæreat, ut si certa ratione constiterit hoc esse falsum quod aliquis sensum Scripturæ esse credebat, id nihilominus asserere præsumat; ne Scriptura ex hoc ab infidelibus derideatur, et ne eis via credendi præcludatur." — (S. Thom. Aquin., S. T. I^{ma}. Qu. lxviii. Art. 1.)

nounce the suspicion that the creed is endangered by scientific discoveries, yet scientific men themselves insist on maintaining the corresponding delusion, that their new doctrines will end in sweeping the ancient faith out of the field of knowledge, and will leave it only a precarious existence in the province of emotion. And it cannot be denied that there are public teachers, who claim some rank as scientific men, and who are really anxious to declare their belief that theology at last is dying, and that the religion of the future must learn to live without the shelter which the religion of the past derived from Scripture, Church, and Creed.

To this objection we must answer, in the first place, that the persons quoted are not, in the best sense, representative; that, on the contrary, their teaching is at variance with the long series of noble examples which prove that the highest scientific attainments are consistent with the humblest faith. And next we must reply, that questions of this nature are to be settled by argument, and not by assertions; and that the spiritual mind commands a vast range of arguments, by which such allegations are abundantly refuted. And here again I reach my old position, that the most energetic spiritual life is exactly that which is least likely to be embarrassed by any attempt to set the laws of Nature in opposition to the laws of the God of Nature. The religious heart,—which has the keenest sense of the Divine Presence, and accepts God's written revelation and the doctrines of His Church as conveying the only account of that Presence which can satisfy the ques-

tionings of man,—such a heart, I say, stands firm as a rock against all waves of unbelief, which come surging up from misinterpretations of the facts of God's presence in material Nature. We know too well in Whom we have believed to be perplexed by any attempts to set the dim teaching of His works against the clear and bright revelation of His Word. We feel too sure that the Spirit which whispers peace to the troubled conscience is the same which once moved on the face of the waters, to be shaken from our moorings by any attempt to interpret its highest forms through its lower manifestations, and to impose the conditions of matter on the world of spirit.

It is one great sign of a living and energetic spirituality to be positively incapable of giving way to doubt or disbelief on any portion of the doctrines which we believe that the Holy Spirit teaches. But this incapacity to doubt makes us absolutely fearless. We can no more fear danger to the great truths of revelation than we can fear because we doubt the fact of our own existence, or the first elements of natural life. Mark it therefore as a sign of danger, if you are too ready to be alarmed at what profess to be scientific assertions, and if you are too eager, either, on the one hand, to condemn them as irreligious, or, on the other, to combine them too hastily with your Christian belief. The latter mistake is very common, and has done much mischief. An uneasy restlessness in search of reconciliations between Scripture and Science betrays a doubt about our own position, a temper of fearfulness which

cannot be satisfied, till we see exactly how some new objection is removed. Surely we can afford to wait God's leisure. If not in time, yet in eternity, we are sure that all these perplexities will be explained, and that every one of them will be found to contribute to God's glory. And while we claim our own independence, let us be ready to grant the same claim, whenever it is equally reasonable and just. We have no right to stop scientific men at every stage, to know how they propose to adjust each new truth into that revealed system to which they have probably given only a partial study. Let us only determine to know our own ground as thoroughly as they profess to know theirs. Let us make up our minds that no harm can result from any honest investigations; and above all things let us recollect, that perfect love casteth out every form and degree of fear; and that if we are under the influence of Divine love, we shall never dream that any mischief can grow out of researches into the marvellous creation of our most loving Lord.

Brethren, in the few remarks which I have had the privilege of addressing to you, I have felt it my duty to offer such advice and warnings as have been suggested especially by my own experience; and it may be that my conception of certain special dangers and difficulties is coloured by my familiarity with the results of a somewhat different system. The hard and stern necessities of our position in Scotland expose us to a different class of perplexities from those which may

be most familiar to yourselves. The difference is not unlike that which strikes the eye as one contrasts the softness of English scenery, and the rounded beauty of its clustering groves, with the rugged contour of the mountains, and the sharp and formal outlines of the forests of the north. In the same spirit we might contrast the religious aspects of a land where the foot of the spoiler has trodden more heavily,—where the past has bequeathed but few and scattered relics of architectural excellence,—where the present has satisfied itself too generally with plain walls, and an unsightly style, and unadorned services ;—we might contrast it, I say, with the matchless beauty of our neighbouring University ; or with the richness of the old cathedrals, chastened from their former and perhaps excessive splendour, yet still scarcely rivalled in their labyrinths of religious light and shadow ; or with the quiet of the countless village churches which rest amidst the green coverts of our English landscapes. Perhaps these blessings may tend to foster a greater luxury of religious emotion ; while we in Scotland are compelled to look rather to the more sinewy struggles of the religious life. Your lot seems to be cast amidst a warmer exuberance of the sentiment of devotion. Our lot condemns us, more frequently than we could wish, to the argumentative contest with conflicting systems. Each lot has its privileges, and each has its dangers. You will bear with me if I have addressed some words of warning, which shew traces of conflicts from which it may be your happier condition to be free. And I

trust that I may ask, that if in anything I have said, you have recognised the wish, though not perhaps the power, to suggest some counsels, which might help you under your approaching responsibilities, you will return it, of your kindness, by praying for us in our less favoured field, that we may be enabled, above all things, to keep our spirits wakeful and our lamps burning ; that we may in all things seek to know the true will of God, and when we know it, may be strong to do it.



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